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CITATION:

Nakamura, Jun. Specker phenomenon in the countable case (Combinatorial and Descriptive Set Theory). 数理解析研究所講究録 2008, 1619: 76-82

ISSUE DATE:

2008-12

URL:

<http://hdl.handle.net/2433/140202>

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Specker phenomenon in the countable case

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abstract

We show that Non-commutative Specker-Eda number \mathfrak{se}_{nc} is equal to Specker-Eda number \mathfrak{se} . \mathfrak{se}_{nc} is the smallest cardinality of subgroups of $\prod_{n<\omega} \mathbb{Z}_n$ which exhibit non-commutative Specker phenomenon. And \mathfrak{se} is the smallest cardinality of subgroups of \mathbb{Z}^ω which exhibit specker phenomenon.

1 Introduction

In 1950, E.Specker [1] proved that any homomorphism from \mathbb{Z}^ω to \mathbb{Z} factors through \mathbb{Z}^n for some n . This theorem is reduced to the following: $h(e_n) = 0$ for all but finitely many n for any homomorphism to \mathbb{Z} where e_n is the element of \mathbb{Z}^ω whose n -th component is 1 and whose other component are all zero. A.Blass [4] named this fact "Specker phenomenon" in 1994.

E.Specker also established subgroups of \mathbb{Z}^ω which exhibit Specker phenomenon. But these subgroup have the cardinality of the continuum 2^{\aleph_0} . So, the next question naturally arises whether the smallest cardinality of subgroups which exhibit Specker phenomenon is 2^{\aleph_0} . In 1983, it was turned out that this question is undecidable on ZFC by K.Eda [2]. And in 1986, S.Kamo [3] also considered a related question in Cohen extension. Then, A.Blass [4] studied the cardinality and named it Specker-Eda number \mathfrak{se} . He pointed out Eda's proof established that $\mathfrak{p} \leq \mathfrak{se} \leq \mathfrak{d}$. In 1994, he proved that $\mathfrak{e}_1 \leq \mathfrak{se} \leq \mathfrak{b}$. Finally, in 1996, J.Brendle and S.Shelah [5] proved that $\mathfrak{se} = \mathfrak{e}_1 = \min\{\mathfrak{e}, \mathfrak{b}\}$. Now, we consider the non-commutative case.

2 Definition of the complete free product

Definition 2.1.

Let G_i ($i \in I$) be groups s.t $G_i \cap G_j = \{e\}$ for any $i \neq j \in I$. we call elements of $\bigcup_{i \in I} G_i$ letters. A word W is a function

$W : \overline{W} \rightarrow \bigcup_{i \in I} G_i$ \overline{W} is a linearly ordered set and $\{\alpha \in \overline{W} \mid W(\alpha) \in G_i\}$ is finite for any $i \in I$. The class of all words is denoted by $\mathcal{W}(G_i : i \in I)$ (abbreviated by \mathcal{W}).

Definition 2.2. The identification of words

U and V are isomorphic ($U \equiv V$) if there exists an order isomorphism $\varphi : \overline{U} \rightarrow \overline{V}$ s.t $\forall \alpha \in \overline{U}$ ($U(\alpha) = V(\varphi(\alpha))$).

It is easily seen that \mathcal{W} becomes a set under this identification.

Definition 2.3. The restricted word of W

For a subset $X \subseteq I$, the restricted word W_X of W is given by the function

$W_X : \overline{W}_X \rightarrow \bigcup_{i \in I} G_i$ where $\overline{W}_X = \{\alpha \in \overline{W} \mid W(\alpha) \in \bigcup_{i \in X} G_i\}$ and $W_X(\alpha) = W(\alpha)$ for all $\alpha \in \overline{W}_X$. Hence $W_X \in \mathcal{W}$. If X is finite, then we can regard W_X as an element of the free product $*_{i \in X} G_i$.

Definition 2.4. The equivalence relation on words

U and V are equivalent ($U \sim V$) if $U_F = V_F$ for all $F \subset\subset I$ where we regard U_F and V_F as elements of the free product $*_{i \in F} G_i$.

So, " $U_F = V_F$ " means that they are equivalent in the sense of the free product $*_{i \in F} G_i$.

Let $[W]$ be the equivalent class of a word W . The composition of two words and the inverse of a word are defined naturally. Thus $\mathcal{W}/\sim = \{[W] \mid W \in \mathcal{W}\}$ becomes a group.

Definition 2.5. The complete free product $\mathbf{x}_{i \in I} G_i$

$\mathbf{x}_{i \in I} G_i$ is the group $\mathcal{W}(G_i : i \in I)/\sim$. Clearly, if I is finite, then $\mathbf{x}_{i \in I} G_i$ is isomorphic to the free product $*_{i \in I} G_i$.

3 Non-commutative Specker-Eda number

Theorem 3.1. Non-commutative Specker's theorem (G.Higman [6], Theorem 1)

Let F be a free group. For any homomorphism h from $\mathbf{x}_{n<\omega}\mathbb{Z}_n$ to F , there exists a natural number n such that h factors through $*_{i< n}\mathbb{Z}_i$.

$$\begin{array}{ccc}
 \mathbf{x}_{n<\omega}\mathbb{Z}_n & \xrightarrow{\quad h \quad} & F \\
 \downarrow p_n & \nearrow \exists \bar{h} & \\
 *_{i< n}\mathbb{Z}_i & &
 \end{array}$$

$$h = \bar{h} \circ p_n \quad p_n: \text{projection s.t } p_n(W) = W_n$$

We can regard a word W as an element of the free product $*_{i< n}\mathbb{Z}_i * \mathbf{x}_{n\leq i<\omega}\mathbb{Z}_i$. So, this theorem means that there exists an n such that $h[\mathbf{x}_{n\leq i<\omega}\mathbb{Z}_i] = \{e\}$ where e is the identity of F . Similarly to the commutative case, this theorem is reduced the following: $h(\delta_n) = e$ for all but finitely n for any homomorphism h to F where δ_n is 1 of \mathbb{Z}_n . If $F = \mathbb{Z}$, we call this non-commutative Specker phenomenon(abbreviated by nc-Specker phenomenon).

Definition 3.1. Non-commutative Specker-Eda number

It is denoted by \mathfrak{se}_{nc} .

$$\mathfrak{se}_{nc} = \min\{|G| : *_{n<\omega}\mathbb{Z}_n \leq G \leq \mathbf{x}_{n<\omega}\mathbb{Z}_n \text{ and } G \text{ exhibits nc-Specker phenomenon.}\}$$

Theorem 3.2. $\mathfrak{se}_{nc} = \mathfrak{se}$

Proof.

Firstly, we show that $\mathfrak{se} \leq \mathfrak{se}_{nc}$. Let $\sigma : \mathbf{x}_{n<\omega}\mathbb{Z}_n \rightarrow \mathbb{Z}^\omega$ be the canonical homomorphism such that $\sigma(W)(n) = W_{\{n\}}$ ($n < \omega$) and G be a subgroup of $\mathbf{x}_{n<\omega}\mathbb{Z}_n$ which exhibits nc-Specker phenomenon and whose cardinality is \mathfrak{se}_{nc} . Then $\sigma[G]$ also exhibits Specker phenomenon. Because, let $h :$

$\sigma[G] \rightarrow \mathbb{Z}$ be a homomorphism. The composition of h and σ is a homomorphism from G to \mathbb{Z} . Therefore, $h(e_n) = h \circ \sigma(\delta_n) = 0$ for all but finitely many n . Then, we get $\mathfrak{se} \leq |\sigma[G]| \leq |G| = \mathfrak{se}_{nc}$.

Next, we show that $\mathfrak{se}_{nc} \leq \mathfrak{se}$. To show this, two lemmas are necessary.

Lemma 3.1. $x, a \in \mathbb{Z}$

$$\forall n < \omega \left(n! \mid x - \sum_{i=1}^{n-1} i!a \right) \Rightarrow x = 0 \text{ and } a = 0$$

Proof.

we can prove by induction that $2 \leq n$ implies $\sum_{i=1}^{n-1} i! \leq 2(n-1)!$. There-

fore, we can easily find a natural number n such that $|x - \sum_{i=1}^{n-1} i!a| < n!$

and $|x - \sum_{i=1}^n i!a| < (n+1)!$. It means that $x - \sum_{i=1}^{n-1} i!a = 0 = x - \sum_{i=1}^n i!a$ \square

To show the second lemma, we consider the following words: U_∞, U_n . For $W \in \mathfrak{x}_{n < \omega} \mathbb{Z}_n$, let $V_n = W_{\omega \setminus n}$. To define U_∞, U_n , we consider such a tree $T = \langle \bigcup_{n < \omega} \left(\prod_{1 \leq m \leq n+1} m \right), \subseteq \rangle$ like the binary tree $\langle 2^{<\omega}, \subseteq \rangle$. Then we order T lexicographically, i.e; If $x, y \in T$, define $x \triangleleft y$ iff $x(n) < y(n)$ where $n \in \text{dom}(x) \cap \text{dom}(y)$ is the least natural number such that $x(n) \neq y(n)$, or $\text{dom}(x) < \text{dom}(y)$. Consequently, T is linearly ordered by this lexicographical order. Now, we define U_∞, U_n as follows.

$$\overline{U_\infty} = T, U_\infty(x) = V_n \quad (x \in \text{Lev}_n(T) = \prod_{1 \leq m \leq n+1} m)$$

$$\overline{U_n} = \{y_n\} \cup \bigcup_{n+1 \leq k < \omega} \text{Lev}_k(T) \text{ where } y_n \text{ is an arbitrary element of } \text{Lev}_n(T),$$

$$U_n(x) = V_k \quad (x \in \text{Lev}_k(T))$$

These definition is not exact because V_n may not be a letter. But we can naturally regard them as the composition of infinitary many words, since V_n does not contain letters δ_i for $i < n$. And we find that they really

become a word.

$$\begin{array}{ccccccc}
& & & & V_3 & \cdots & \\
& & & & V_3 & \cdots & \\
& & & & V_3 & \cdots & \\
& & & V_2 & V_3 & \cdots & \\
& & V_1 & V_2 & \cdots & & \\
& & & V_2 & \ddots & & \\
U_\infty = V_0 & & & & & & \\
& & & V_2 & \cdots & & \\
& & V_1 & V_2 & \cdots & & \\
& & & V_2 & V_3 & \cdots & \\
& & & & V_3 & \cdots & \\
& & & & V_3 & \cdots & \\
& & & & V_3 & \cdots & \cdots \\
& & & & & \ddots & \\
& & & & & & \\
& & & & V_{n+2} & \cdots & \\
& & & & & \ddots & \\
& & & & & & \\
& & & V_{n+1} & \vdots & & \\
& & & & & & \\
& & & & & & \\
& & & & V_{n+2} & \cdots & \\
& & & & & \ddots & \\
& & & & & & \\
U_n = V_n & & & \vdots & & & \\
& & & & & & \\
& & & & V_{n+2} & \cdots & \\
& & & & & \ddots & \\
& & & & & & \\
& & & V_{n+1} & \vdots & & \\
& & & & & & \\
& & & & & & \\
& & & & V_{n+2} & \cdots & \\
& & & & & \ddots &
\end{array}$$

Now, we mention the second lemma.

Lemma 3.2. Let G be a subgroup of $\mathbf{x}_{n<\omega}\mathbb{Z}_n$ containing all δ_n . If, for every $W \in \ker(\sigma) \cap G$, G contains U_∞ and all U_n coresponding to W ,

then any homomorphism h from G to \mathbb{Z} factors through $\sigma[G]$.

$$\begin{array}{ccc}
 G & \xrightarrow{\quad h \quad} & \mathbb{Z} \\
 \sigma \downarrow & \nearrow \exists \bar{h} & \\
 \sigma[G] & &
 \end{array}$$

$$h = \bar{h} \circ \sigma \quad \sigma: \text{canonical homomorphism}$$

Proof.

It is sufficient to show that $\ker(\sigma) \cap G \subseteq \ker(h)$. Let G' be a commutator subgroup of G and $[W]$ be a element of G/G' . Let $W \in \ker(\sigma) \cap G$. Then $[W] = [V_n]$ for all n because G/G' is an abelian group. By the figure of U_∞, U_n , we have

$$\begin{aligned}
 [U_\infty] &= \sum_{i=1}^{n-1} i! [V_{i-1}] + n! [U_{n-1}] \\
 &= \sum_{i=1}^{n-1} i! [W] + n! [U_{n-1}]
 \end{aligned}$$

And there exists a homomorphism $h_0 : G' \rightarrow \mathbb{Z}$ s.t $h(x) = h_0([x])$ for any $x \in G$ by the homomorphism theorem because $G' \subseteq \ker(h)$. Therefore, we get

$$n! \mid h_0([U_\infty]) - \sum_{i=1}^{n-1} i! h_0([W]) \quad \text{for all } n$$

So, we have $h(W) = h_0([W]) = 0$ by Lemma 3.1. \square

Now, we return to the proof of $\mathfrak{se}_{\text{nc}} \leq \mathfrak{se}$. Our goal is getting a subgroup of $\mathfrak{x}_{n < \omega} \mathbb{Z}_n$ whose cardinality is \mathfrak{se} and which exhibits nc-Specker phenomenon. In the diagram of Lemma 3.2, if $\sigma[G]$ exhibits Specker phenomenon, then G also exhibits nc-Specker phenomenon because $h(\delta_n) = \bar{h}(e_n)$. So, we take a subgroup H of \mathbb{Z}^ω whose cardinality is \mathfrak{se} and

which exhibits Specker phenomenon. $\sigma^{-1}[H]$ also exhibits nc-Specker phenomenon, but, unfortunately, the cardinality of $\ker(\sigma)$ is 2^{\aleph_0} . Let X be a set such that $\sigma[X] = H$ and $|X| = \mathfrak{sc}$. Then let G be the smallest subgroup which contains X and satisfies the clause of Lemma 3.2. Obviously, the size of G is \mathfrak{sc} . And $\sigma[G]$ contains H , so $\sigma[G]$ also exhibits Specker phenomenon. Therefore, G is the desired subgroup. \square

4 Acknowledgment

I would like to thank Katuya Eda. The ideas of proofs are almost due to him. I could not finish this work without his supporting.

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